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THESIS

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR: APPLICATION OF THE REASONED-ACTION APPROACH IN LEGITIMACY-BUILDING INFLUENCE OPERATIONS

by

Bryan H. Rhee

June 2014

Thesis Advisor:	Hy Rothstein
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The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that the military often struggles to understand the people it attempts to influence. The military tried for years to build legitimacy for the host governments, with little success. It has become clear that the military fails to understand the determinants of human behavior. This thesis demonstrates a way to improve how the military conducts one of the most common types of influence operations—building legitimacy—by analyzing past influence operations through the reasoned-action approach model, a theory for the prediction of human social behavior. This framework is generally well regarded in social psychology; many studies have shown its ability to predict and understand human social behavior. The results of this thesis suggest that influence messages that self-aggrandize the host-nation government are ineffective and, in some cases, counterproductive to building legitimacy.

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UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR: APPLICATION OF THE REASONED-ACTION APPROACH IN LEGITIMACY-BUILDING INFLUENCE OPERATIONS

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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from the

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ABSTRACT

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that the military often struggles to understand the people it attempts to influence. The military tried for years to build legitimacy for the host governments, with little success. It has become clear that the military fails to understand the determinants of human behavior. This thesis demonstrates a way to improve how the military conducts one of the most common types of influence operations—building legitimacy—by analyzing past influence operations through the reasoned-action approach model, a theory for the prediction of human social behavior. This framework is generally well regarded in social psychology; many studies have shown its ability to predict and understand human social behavior. The results of this thesis suggest that influence messages that self-aggrandize the host-nation government are ineffective and, in some cases, counterproductive to building legitimacy.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
IO	Information Operations
IRC	Information Related Capabilities
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KPP	Communist Party of Poland
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
PKWN	Polish Committee of National Liberation
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PPR	Polish Workers' Party
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
RAA	Reasoned-Action Approach
TA	Target Audience
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
TPPR	Society for Polish–Soviet Friendship
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   BACKGROUND

In 1934, Professor Richard LaPiere of Stanford University traveled extensively around the United States visiting various hotels and restaurants with a young Chinese couple.[1] The public's attitude toward Chinese at the time was negative, and LaPiere took notes on how the couple was treated. They visited 250 hotels and restaurants during their tour, but in only one instance were they refused service. After the trip, LaPiere wrote the establishments and asked whether they would accept members of the Chinese race. The possible responses were "yes," "no," and "depends on the circumstances." Of the 128 replies, 118, or 92 percent, stated they would not accept members of the Chinese race in their establishments. This study was the first of many on the gap between people's attitudes and their behavior, demonstrating that factors other than attitude are involved in the behavioral decision-making process.[2]

In 2012, I served as a psychological operations (PSYOP) planner in Afghanistan, developing influence programs at the operational level. Our campaigns routinely focused on changing or reinforcing attitudes on key issues, ranging from promoting the competency of Afghan security forces to delegitimizing the Taliban. Quarterly surveys were conducted quantitatively to measure the attitudes of ordinary Afghans over time. Our surveys—as well as other surveys conducted by unaffiliated organizations—showed low support for the Taliban across most of the country. Yet troops on the ground routinely reported active or passive support for the Taliban. Reality seemed to contradict the data collected, and I grew curious to why attitudes were not a good predictor of behavior.

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[1] Christopher J. Armitage and Julie Christian, "From Attitudes to Behavior: Basic and Applied Research on the Theory of Planned Behavior," in *Planned Behavior: The Relationship between Human Thought and Action*, ed. Christopher J. Armitage and Julie Christian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 1–2.

[2] Ibid.

These examples touch on a persistent problem with current military information support operations (MISO) and in influence operations writ large: a lack of understanding by influence planners of how human social behavior is formed. MISO's association with marketing and advertising causes many planners to focus on changing attitudes as their end goal. But over the past 50 years, social psychologists have identified determinants of behavior other than attitude that must be taken into account.

In 1980, Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen proposed a new model for the prediction of behavior and behavioral intention, called the theory of reasoned action (TRA).[3] The TRA seeks to explain why a person's attitude towards a behavior frequently contrasts with his actual behavior, positing that attitude is one of two key variables that determine a person's *behavioral intention*—which in turn is the best indicator of actual behavior. The other variable identified in TRA as contributing to behavioral intention is what Fishbein and Ajzen called *subjective norms*. Subjective norms (now known as *perceived norms* in the latest version of their theory) are the perceived social pressures that shape behavioral intention. In 1991, Ajzen refined the TRA by introducing a third variable, *perceived behavioral control*, to address situations where individuals lack volitional control over the behavior in question.[4] This new model is the theory of planned behavior (TPB). In 2010, the TPB was further refined; while the core elements remain the same,[5] a new framework, the reasoned-action approach (RAA), is offered. Unlike human-behavior theories that are applied specifically to a particular behavior—

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[3] Wendy Hardeman et al., "Application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in Behaviour Change Interventions: A Systematic Review," *Psychology & Health* 17, no. 2 (2002): 124, doi:10.1080/08870440290013644.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach* (New York: Psychology Press, 2010), 20–23.

such as the protection-motivation theory[6]—the reasoned-action approach is a unifying framework that applies to all social behavior.[7]

B.   RESEARCH QUESTION

This research asks how influence operations aimed at building legitimacy can be improved. The recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that the predominant method of conducting influence operations to improve legitimacy is not effective. By applying the reasoned-action approach to analysis of past influence campaigns, what insights may we gain to serve military influence operations?

C.   STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This thesis demonstrates how to improve the way the military conducts one of the most common types of influence operations—building legitimacy—by analyzing past influence operations through the reasoned-action approach (RAA). This framework is well regarded in social psychology; countless studies have shown its ability to accurately predict and understand human social behavior.[8] Many versions of the RAA have been devised and extensively referenced. Using the RAA, this thesis shows conceptually how influence operations focused on legitimacy may be improved; as RAA efficacy is well established, it is not tested here.

D.   POLITICAL LEGITIMACY DEFINED

Legitimacy building is important to the United States in cases where it wishes to establish or maintain political stability within a country. For the purposes of this thesis, legitimacy is defined as the "people's recognition and

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[6] Kenzie A. Cameron, "A Practitioner's Guide to Persuasion: An Overview of 15 Selected Persuasion Theories, Models and Frameworks," *Patient Education and Counseling* 74, no. 3 (March 2009): 310, doi:10.1016/j.pec.2008.12.003.

[7] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, 2.

[8] Hardeman et al., "Application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in Behaviour Change Interventions: A Systematic Review."

acceptance of the validity of the rules of their entire political system and the decisions of their rulers."[9] This suggests that governments with high legitimacy are more stable, while governments with low legitimacy must rely on coercion to implement their policies. People inherently tend to be disobedient of government authority when legitimacy is low and will only be swayed through force.[10] H.L. Nieburg expands upon this definition:

> Legitimacy cannot be claimed or granted by mere technicality of law; it must be won by the success of state institutions in cultivating and meeting expectations, in mediating interests and in aiding the process by which the values of individuals and groups are allocated in the making, enforcement, adjudication, and general observance of law.[11]

From these definitions, this thesis makes the assumption that legitimacy is not just the product of an attitude or a frame of mind about a political system or its leader—it stems from a set of behaviors that indicate support or opposition to a political system. It is different from political support—one may not support a leader politically, yet find the government legitimate.

E.   THE REASONED-ACTION APPROACH

The reasoned-action approach (RAA) adopts principles found in social psychology to provide a framework for understanding, and therefore predicting, the behavior of target audiences. By understanding how behavior is formed, researchers can develop effective interventions to change it. The RAA is very closely related to the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior originally developed by Fishbein and Ajzen.[12] Figure 1 shows the RAA model.

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[9] Kenneth F. Warren, ed., *Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008), 2:520.

[10] John Fraser, "Validating a Measure of National Political Legitimacy," *American Journal of Political Science* 18, no. 1 (February 1, 1974): 119, doi:10.2307/2110657.

[11] H. L. Nieburg, *Political Violence* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1969), 54.

[12] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, xvii.
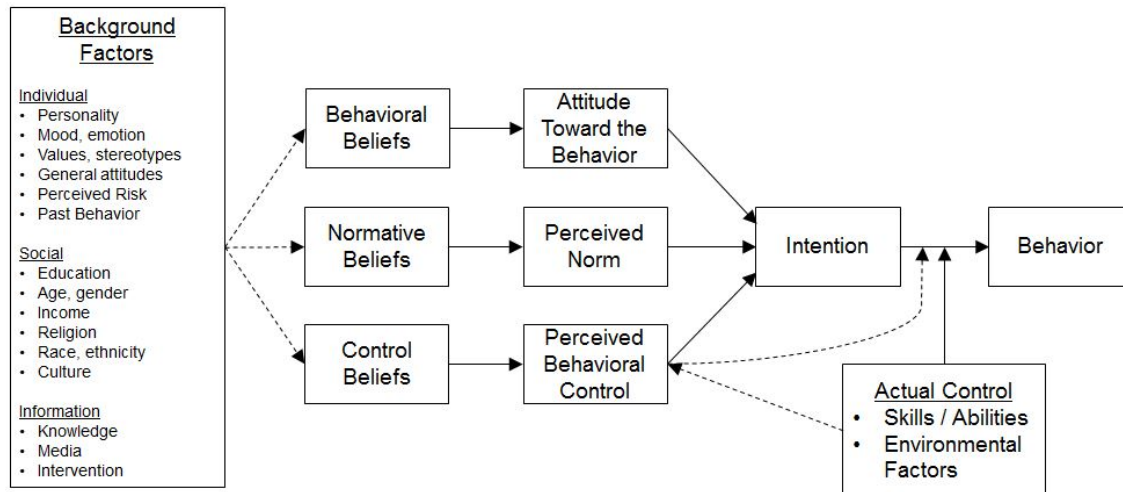
Figure 1.   The Reasoned-Action-Approach Model[13]

The reasoned-action approach asserts that behavioral intention, which is the best indicator of actual behavior, comprises three variables: attitude toward the behavior; perceived norm, or the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior; and perceived behavioral control.[14] Generally speaking, the more positive the attitude and perceived norm toward the behavior, and the stronger the perceived behavioral control, the stronger the behavioral intent to perform the desired behavior. Depending on the target audience and the behavior, the weights of these variables will differ.[15] Note that only in cases where people actually have control over the behavior in question is behavioral intention a good predictor of actual behavior.

In deciding whether to perform a behavior, an individual spontaneously generates these three variables, based on "readily accessible" or salient beliefs, to form behavioral intent.[16] Fishbein and Ajzen suggest that people hold many beliefs, but only a small number of them (salient beliefs) are accessed in forming

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[13] Ibid., 22.

[14] Ibid., 20–21.

[15] Ibid., 21.

[16] Ibid., 321.

the determinants of behavioral intention. Figure 1 shows the three categories of beliefs that are associated with each of the three variables. Attitude toward a behavior is formed when the strength of behavioral beliefs associated with the behavior are weighted by the evaluation of the perceived "outcome or attribute."[17] A perceived norm is formed when the strength of normative beliefs are weighted by the "motivation to comply with the referent in question."[18] Finally, perceived-behavior control is formed when the strength of control beliefs are weighted by the "perceived power of the control factor."[19] The goal of behavioral interventions is either to influence those underlying salient beliefs most strongly associated with the behavior of interest or to introduce new salient beliefs. This framework does not attempt to change attitudes, norms, and controls, since, as spontaneous values generated by salient beliefs, they cannot be directly changed. Salient beliefs are influenced, but not necessarily linked to, the background factors associated with a given individual.

F.   HYPOTHESES

This research examines the following hypotheses under the reasoned-action approach:

H1: Messages that primarily focus on promoting the sponsor are likely to succeed in building legitimacy for the sponsor.

H2: Messages that primarily focus on undermining a competing adversary are more likely to succeed in building legitimacy for the sponsor.

The first hypothesis speaks to the United States military's recent attempts at building legitimacy through influence operations. These efforts often use themes that promote "good news" stories as a means to convince people that the government is effective. The second hypothesis is also based on recent influence

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[17] Icek Ajzen, "Theory of Planned Behavior Diagram," *Icek Ajzen: Homepage*, accessed April 21, 2014, http://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.diag.html.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

operations and suggests legitimacy can be built for the sponsor if all the alternatives are delegitimized.

G.   METHODOLOGY

Over a thousand empirical studies in professional journals use a version of the reasoned-action approach.[20] Its efficacy and validity have been tested in numerous cases,[21] and studies have shown that it is a reliable predictor of intentions and behavior over time.[22] Hence, this thesis assumes the efficacy of the reasoned-action approach and examines several case studies through the lens of the RAA to understand why some influence campaigns succeed and others fail. If the RAA offers satisfactory explanations, we conclude it can be successfully applied in designing military influence operations.

This thesis presents three case studies where organizations or governments attempted to build legitimacy by influencing a populace at the national or operational level.

The first study examines Communist Poland, where the government focused on building legitimacy through decades of pro-regime propaganda, with little success.[23] The government controlled virtually all means of communication and operated a robust propaganda campaign, yet had continual issues with legitimacy. Legitimacy improved, however, when the people believed a Soviet invasion was credible and imminent. This case was selected because the

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[20] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, xvii.

[21] Christopher J. Armitage and Mark Conner, "Efficacy of the Theory of Planned Behaviour: A Meta-Analytic Review," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 40, no. 4 (December 2001): 471–99, doi:10.1348/014466601164939.

[22] Christopher J. Armitage and Mark Conner, "The Theory of Planned Behaviour: Assessment of Predictive Validity and 'Perceived Control," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 38, no. 1 (March 1, 1999): 35–54, doi:10.1348/014466699164022.

[23] Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," in *Psychological Operations and Political Warfare in Long-Term Strategic Planning*, ed. Janos Radvanyi (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990), 95.

government seeking legitimacy had total control of mass communications and was backed by an external foreign sponsor.

In Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) failed to recognize ethnic and tribal dynamics and focused on showcasing the effectiveness of Afghan security forces and good governance, when in reality these were ineffective. Coalition forces also attempted to build legitimacy for the Afghan government by undermining the Taliban, which had mixed results. This case was selected because the government that was seeking legitimacy was faced with a growing insurgency that was gaining legitimacy with the population.

The last case study examines Hezbollah, which successfully used influence operations to build legitimacy with Shiites by scapegoating Israel and offering social and civil services the Lebanese government was not providing. Hezbollah's struggle to gain legitimacy among non-Shiites in Lebanon is also examined. This case was selected because it involves a non-state actor that was able to usurp the government's authority and gain legitimacy with large portions of the population.

H.   OUTLINE

Chapter II contains a literature review and highlights problems in contemporary influence operations. It reviews the military's current approach to target audience analysis and discuss how the model used for target audience behavior is too simple to describe the complex dynamics of social behavior. The RAA and Fishbein and Ajzen's approach to a behavioral-intervention program are presented in more detail.

Chapters III, IV, and V explore the cases of Poland, Afghanistan, and Hezbollah, respectively, for applicable insights. Chapter VI summarizes findings and recommends a way forward.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is divided into three broad sections. The first defines commonly used terms in military influence operations and the reasoned-action approach. The second reviews problems commonly identified in influence operations. Finally, the third section surveys the reasoned-action approach as used in designing behavioral-intervention programs.

A.   INFLUENCE TERMINOLOGY

1.   Influence Operations

There is no doctrinally accepted definition for influence operations, although U.S. Army Field Manual 3-13, *Inform and Influence Activities* indicates influence activities "typically focus on persuading selected foreign audiences to support U.S. objectives or to persuade those audiences to stop supporting the adversary or enemy."[24]

For this thesis, influence operations are defined as the deliberate and synchronized execution of specific actions or activities to influence behaviors of a target audience in support of specific military or national objectives. Unlike PSYOP/MISO, influence operations encompass all activities that can be employed to influence a target audience.

2.   Military Information Support Operations

Within the U.S. Department of Defense, the term *psychological operations* (PSYOP) has been replaced by *military information support operations* (MISO), but their definitions remain essentially the same and they are used interchangeably in this thesis. Unlike influence operations, MISO focus strictly on conveying selected information and indicators to the target audience. Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations,* defines MISO as the following:

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[24] U.S. Army, *FM 3-13: Inform and Influence Activities* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2013), 1–2, http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/fm3_13.pdf.

MISO are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. MISO focuses on the cognitive dimension of the information environment where its TA includes not just potential and actual adversaries, but also friendly and neutral populations.[25]

3. Information Operations

Information operations (IO), as defined by joint doctrine, is the "integrated employment, during military operations, of information related capabilities (IRCs) in concert with other lines of operations to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own capabilities."[26] IO is similar to influence operations in that it uses various capabilities to influence a target audience. However, the definition of IO is broader and focuses not just on influencing, but also on disrupting, corrupting, or usurping the target audience. While not the focus here, it is important to distinguish IO from influence operations.

4. Primary Beliefs

According to Fishbein and Ajzen, primary beliefs are those salient beliefs that "provide the foundation for the behavior of interest."[27] An influence campaign may be successful in altering some beliefs of a target audience, but if those beliefs are not primary, it is unlikely that behavioral change will follow. Primary beliefs emerge from subordinate behavioral, normative, and control beliefs and frequently change depending on the situation.

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[25] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-13: Information Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_13.pdf.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, 337.

B. ISSUES IN THE CURRENT APPROACH TO MILITARY INFLUENCE OPERATIONS

An important task in any influence operation is choosing a desired behavior that can be measured or observed. Failure to do so is a common pitfall in behavioral-intervention programs, according to Fishbein and Ajzen. Although not essential for a successful campaign, measurements of behavior are useful in assessing influence campaigns and validating target audience analysis. Adjusting the design of influence operations is difficult without an effective way to assess progress.

Another problem commonly cited in the literature is that of properly identifying the motivations of a target audience. In the U.S. military, the method currently used to conduct target audience analysis is ineffective and offers only a simplistic approach to understanding human behavior.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the military often fails to conduct effective influence operations because it understands behavioral change mostly in terms of attitudes. Many influence operations are designed to alter the target audience's attitude as the end goal, rather than as a means toward behavioral change, the real goal.

1. Measuring Behavior

According to Fishbein and Ajzen, a key component in understanding behavior is accurate measurement and observation of the behavior of interest. Quantitative data is commonly missing in contemporary influence operations, and MISO/PSYOP must rely heavily on anecdotal evidence to measure behavior and effectiveness.[28] The problem for planners is to understand and predict the behavior of a target audience when they cannot accurately measure whether, when, and if a behavior is performed. Although the need for quantitative data is obvious, measuring behavior is very difficult.

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[28] David H. Sammons, *PSYOP and the Problem of Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) for the Combatant Commander*, May 18, 2004, 14–15, http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA425993.

Influence planners typically rely on three sources to measure behavior, starting with raw data. If an influence planner wants to find out whether people are calling a rewards hotline, for example, an analysis of call logs will determine the answer. Raw data such as this is extremely valuable, but often unavailable, for a variety of reasons.

The second data source available to planners is intelligence and atmospherics. While using intelligence to determine how frequently a behavior is performed is highly anecdotal,[29] it is typically the closest military planners have to direct observation, the "gold standard of behavioral assessment."[30] Unfortunately, ever-changing collection requirements and the limited availability of collection assets make this type of measurement unreliable.

The third source of measurement is public-opinion polls, which assess the attitudes of a target audience.[31] The military uses polls with the assumption that attitude is the most important determinant of behavior—a highly flawed supposition that has been proved false.

The difficulty of determining whether a behavior is being performed makes it hard for influence planners to validate their key assumptions about the target audience and assess the effectiveness of a campaign. This lack of validation and assessment typically causes influence operations to run longer than scheduled.

2.   Target Audience Analysis

A good target audience analysis is essential in any effective campaign,[32] but the framework offered by military doctrine oversimplifies this task and makes

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[29] Ibid., 7–15.

[30] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, 31.

[31] Arturo Munoz, *U.S. Military Information Operations in Afghanistan: Effectiveness of Psychological Operations 2001-2010* (RAND Corporation, May 2012), 19–29, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2012/RAND_MG1060.pdf.

[32] U.S. Army, *FM 3-05.301: Psychological Operations Process, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2007), 2–1, https://armypubs.us.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_c/pdf/fm3_05x301.pdf.

meaningful analysis difficult. The military employs cause-and-effect analysis—commonly used in marketing—to understand human behavior. This model requires planners to identify a current behavior, determine what causes it, and predict its consequences.[33] This model naively assumes that discerning motivation is not difficult, and its continuing use is cited as problematic, indicating unwarranted confidence in marketing and advertising principles that poorly fit a military context.[34] For example, in business, market research may show a customer's need for something to address a certain problem. That "something" is assumed to be a product to be sold to the customer. This assumption does not translate to the battlefield, as Mackay et al. observed in Afghanistan:

> Just because Afghans say they lack food and shelter does not mean that they will be persuaded by arguments promising better food and shelter. This is an egregious assumption, and would be to the detriment of your message campaign from the outset.[35]

3.　　An Attitude-Based Approach to Influence

According to Mackay et al., a focus on attitudinal communications is the reason the United States and allies fail to conduct effective influence. This is not to say that attitude is unimportant; but attitudinal communications aim at changing people's attitudes as a goal or end state, rather than focusing on changing their behavior.[36] While Mackay et al. observe that this type of communication works in business, where the target audience is compliant,[37] there is little evidence that attitudinal communications work where the audience is noncompliant. With compliant audiences, the desired behavior is, for the most

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[33] Ibid., 2–11.

[34] Andrew Mackay, Steve Tatham, and Lee Rowland, *The Effectiveness of US Military Information Operations in Afghanistan 2001-2010: Why RAND Missed the Point* (Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, December 2012), i, http://www.da.mod.uk/publications/library/central-asian-series/20121214_Whyrandmissedthepoint_U_1202a.pdf.

[35] Andrew Mackay and Steve Tatham, *Behavioural Conflict: Why Understanding People and Their Motivations Will Prove Decisive in Future Conflict* (Essex, United Kingdom: Military Studies Press, 2011), 168.

[36] Mackay, Tatham, and Rowland, *Why RAND Missed the Point*, 3.

[37] Ibid., 5.

part, congruent with beliefs already held. In their 2012 report on the effectiveness of MISO/PSYOP, Mackay et al. give an example of how compliant audiences respond to attitudinal communications:

> One brand of toothpaste, for example, is not significantly different [from] another, but if you associate with it, through an attitudinal marketing campaign, certain "desirable" qualities or characteristics (for example, extra whitening capability, pleasant breath qualities, etc.) you effectively differentiate it from your competitors in the eyes of the consumer who is now more likely to purchase your brand. As a consumer walking into a supermarket you will be confronted by an array of different toothpastes and your decision to purchase may well be swayed by an [advertisement] you have seen for a particular brand. The key to this, however, is that you have already made the decision to purchase; your behaviour [sic] has been predetermined by your upbringing (always clean your teeth before bed), your education (not cleaning your teeth will cause you painful medical problems) and other social factors (guys with bad breath don't get girls!) for example.[38]

In this example, the decision to behave in a certain way (i.e., to purchase toothpaste) has already been made—the consumer just needs to be steered or "nudged" toward a particular brand. By contrast, in military influence operations, the target audience is often noncompliant, in the sense that the behavior the military wants them to perform is not consistent with the beliefs they hold.

C. THE REASONED-ACTION APPROACH TO BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

The reasoned-action approach is a contemporary theoretical framework for understanding behavior and prediction, built on the earlier theories of reasoned action (TRA) and planned behavior (TPB), which have generated over a thousand empirical studies published in professional journals across disciplines.[39] Fishbein and Ajzen argue that although human social behavior is complex, a set of variables can be applied to all types of behavior such that it can

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[38] Ibid., 4.

[39] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, xvii.

be understood and predicted. This allows the development of effective behavioral-intervention programs. Fishbein and Ajzen do not assert these variables as exclusively valuable in understanding a particular behavior, but offer the RAA as a unifying conceptual framework that can incorporate other variables as warranted.[40]

1. Identifying the Behavior of Interest and Target Audience

The first step in the RAA is to determine which behavior of interest a researcher wants to understand. This may seem straightforward, but the definition of a behavior dictates how it is observed and measured and must be carefully made, according to inherent tradeoffs. To make a behavior easier to observe, we can narrow the definition to something quite specific; however, the more specific the behavior, the less informative the data. For example, measuring how frequently people used the treadmill at the Naval Postgraduate School gym on Mother's Day at 8 a.m. is easier to collect than figuring out how frequently Monterey residents exercised in the past two weeks. It is virtually impossible to observe the latter directly without following and observing the target audience 24 hours a day. Nevertheless, the generality of the behavior gives it better utility. Fishbein and Ajzen suggest self-reporting as a way around this problem—a technique the military has not embraced when it comes to influence operations. There are risks associated with self-reporting, and for obvious reasons it is applicable for only certain behaviors.[41]

Fishbein and Ajzen recommend that behavioral interventions should be conducted with the assumption that a substantial segment of the target audience is not performing the desired behavior. If this is true, it is likely the target audience is too broad and must be further refined since a significant portion of the target audience is already performing the desired behavior.[42]

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[40] Ibid., 2.

[41] Ibid., 37–38.

[42] Ibid., 325.

There are two reasons a substantial segment of the target audience may not be performing a desired behavior—either they have no intention of doing so or they intend to, but fail to execute.[43] This is important because the method used to influence someone depends on whether he already intends to perform the behavior. Persons who have no behavioral intent are "in a deliberative mind-set in which they seek information about the feasibility and desirability of the contemplated behavior."[44] Persons who already intend to perform the behavior are in an "implemental mind-set where they focus on information relevant to the implementation of the intention, that is, on where, when, and how to act on the intention."[45]

2. Formative Research

A critical step in developing an intervention strategy is formative research.[46] Unless interventions are carefully and deliberately designed and evaluated, precious resources may be squandered or the result may be worse than no intervention at all. Formative research should begin with an elicitation of beliefs from a pilot sample that is representative of the overall target audience. Additionally, self-reports of past behavior and demographic information should also be collected, since past behavior links to future behavior and demographic information helps verify representativeness. A sample size of 30 people is sufficient for a highly homogeneous population, while a heterogeneous group requires a larger pilot sample—usually 15–20 people per major subgroup.[47]

A representative target audience has both qualitative and quantitative elements. Qualitative elements are used to identify the salient beliefs (behavioral, normative, and control) associated with a desired behavior. Fishbein and Ajzen recommend asking participants the following:

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 326–327.

[47] Ibid.

- *List what they believe to be the advantages and disadvantages of performing the behavior of interest.[48]*

- *Indicate who would approve and disapprove of their performing the behavior, as well as their beliefs as to who does and does not perform it.[49]*

- *List the factors that would make it easier or more difficult for them to perform the behavior.[50]*

On the quantitative side, the sample should be able to show the prevalence of the desired behavior within the target audience and should determine "whether people intend to perform the behavior and how much control they perceive they have over performing the behavior."[51]

3. Beliefs

A key assumption of this model is that behavior "follows reasonably and often spontaneously from the information or beliefs people possess about the behavior under consideration."[52] Fishbein and Ajzen identify three kinds of beliefs: behavioral, normative, and control.[53] For behavior to change, suggest the authors, corresponding behavioral, normative, and control beliefs called *primary beliefs* must be changed.[54] Regardless of how beliefs related to a specific behavior are formed, they influence the decision as to whether a behavior is performed.

Those beliefs linked to positive or negative consequences associated with performing a behavior are called behavioral beliefs. These beliefs are assumed to determine the "attitude toward personally performing the behavior." If a person

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[48] Ibid., 327.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 20.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 321.

perceives a certain behavior to have more positive than negative consequences, it is likely his attitude toward the behavior is also positive.[55]

Normative beliefs refer to perceived behavioral expectations a person experiences from individuals or groups. It also encompasses whether the behavior of interest is actually performed by those important to him. These beliefs form what is called a *perceived norm*—the perceived social pressure an individual experiences as to whether to perform the behavior. If the person sees that most of his or her significant others approve of the behavior, and indeed, perform it, the person is likely to experience social pressure to perform it as well.[56]

Beliefs that are formed about personal and environmental factors associated with the behavior of interest are called control beliefs. These have to do with factors the person sees as facilitating or impeding the execution of the behavior. When these beliefs are aggregated, a perceived self-efficacy or *perceived behavioral control* emerges. Perceived behavioral control is considered high when more control beliefs are associated with facilitating than inhibiting factors.[57]

Fishbein and Ajzen argue the examination of beliefs offers "insights into the way people think about behavior." At this level, researchers can really understand how things influence decisions about a given behavior. Identifying the relevant behavioral, normative, and control beliefs are key to designing a behavior-change intervention.

4.   Behavioral Intention

After attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control have been formed from underlying beliefs, they are directly available to influence intentions and behavior. The combination of these variables forms *behavioral*

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[55] Ibid., 20.

[56] Ibid., 20–21.

[57] Ibid., 21.

intention, a person's readiness to perform the behavior in question. The weight of each variable will differ depending on the behavior and the target audience,[58] which explains why groups with comparable attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral controls may behave differently.

Behavioral intention is the best indicator and predictor of actual behavior. However, this is true only when people have real control over the behavior in question, not just perceived control. Because the measurement of actual behavioral control is not possible for most behaviors, perceived behavioral control can be used as a substitute. The more accurately perceived behavioral control reflects reality, the more likely intention will predict behavior.[59]

D.   SUMMARY

The literature review in this chapter defines terms, introduces major problems in the current approach to influence operations, and notes that reliance on marketing principles has been unproductive in Iraq and Afghanistan. This review suggests that an attitudinal approach to influence should not be the goal of influence operations; rather, objectives should be behavioral. The reasoned-action approach to behavioral intervention is discussed, several recommendations by Fishbein and Ajzen concerning developing programs are relayed, with potential shortfalls identified, and the reasoned-action approach is justified as a superior model over cause-and-effect in understanding human behavior.

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 20–22.

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III.   COMMUNIST POLAND

A.   BACKGROUND

World War II marked a time of significant change in Polish society. Millions of Poles died and many more were forced to relocate by the time the war ended in 1945. In 1939, both Germany and Russia invaded and partitioned Poland. Furthermore, during what is now known as the Katyn Massacre, the Soviets killed close to 22,000 Polish nationals captured during its invasion.[60]

Historically, Polish politics had included a communist party, but by 1939, the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) had been dissolved.[61] Most Poles saw it as an agent of the Soviet Union and marginalized the party in a country with deep anti-Russian attitudes.[62] Unfortunately for Polish communists, Joseph Stalin was also distrustful of the KPP and viewed its members as agents of the Polish regime, arresting or killing most during the Great Purge (1934-40).[63] Germany's 1941 invasion of Russia, however, necessitated a Russo-Polish alliance in response. To Stalin, this meant reviving the communist party in Poland.[64]

Stalin suggested that for communism to thrive, it should become palatable by embracing a more Polish identity.[65] Thus the new communist party would not emphasize links with the Soviet Union, but rather focus on nationalistic themes to gain legitimacy. The Polish Workers' Party (PPR) was accordingly created in

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[60] Benjamin B. Fischer, *The Katyn Controversy: Stalin's Killing Field* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, Winter 1999), https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter99-00/art6.html.

[61] Jan C. Behrends, "Nation and Empire: Dilemmas of Legitimacy during Stalinism in Poland (1941–1956)," *Nationalities Papers* 37, no. 4 (2009): 445–446, doi:10.1080/00905990902985686.

[62] Ibid., 445.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 445–446.

[65] Ibid., 446.

1942, by Polish communist exiles who had survived the Great Purge and were living in Russia.[66]

Indigenous nationalist groups were deemed a threat to the PPR and the Soviet Union. The Polish Home Army, a resistance movement that reported to the anti-communist government-in-exile, was initially tolerated, and the Soviets accepted their assistance in fighting the Germans.[67] However, as soon as practical, the Soviets arrested Home Army commanders they saw as "counter-revolutionaries."[68] The true Soviet attitude towards nationalistic movements was displayed in the Warsaw Uprising on August 1, 1944, when the Soviet Army was ordered to stop their advance in Poland just short of Warsaw and watch the Home Army get destroyed by the Germans. Despite their heroic efforts, the Home Army, which was the largest resistance movement in Poland, was crushed after 63 days.[69] This set the stage for the communist takeover of Poland, as liberated areas once controlled by the Nazis were transferred to the Soviet Army and then to Polish communists.[70] With the disbanding of the Home Army, the communists emerged as the most powerful political force in Poland, and by 1946, the PPR was firmly in power, with assistance from the Soviet Union.[71]

B.   BUILDING LEGITIMACY

1.   Soviet Friendship

Due to a variety of social, historical, and cultural beliefs, the Poles were very resistant to communism and its values. Its establishment was seen as a result of the Soviet occupation rather than an indigenous movement with popular

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 96–98.

[68] Ibid., 97.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 96–98.

[71] Nicholas John Cull, David Culbert, and David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion : A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 304.

support.[72] Polish communists found themselves operating in a hostile environment whose population saw them as puppets of the Soviet Union. The leaders knew from the onset that communism would be a hard sell, and influence operations began in the early 1940s.[73] The difficulty was to prevent the people from linking Polish communism with the Soviet Union—a country perceived as an enemy responsible for destroying Polish sovereignty.[74] Alfred Lampe, a surviving member of the original KPP recognized the difficulties:

> With the exception of the communists all traditional political parties in Poland are anti-soviet [sic]. . . . An orientation towards the USSR, in the way we have seen in Czechoslovakia, never existed and does not exist in Poland in any party. And it cannot exist because the historical development of Poland and Czechoslovakia was different and the political traditions differ from one country to the other.[75]

The Polish communists' first well known propaganda campaign during the German occupation, entitled "What are We Fighting For?," pushed nationalistic themes and the need to ally with the Soviet Union.[76] The PPR portrayed itself as the "sole representative of a genuine struggle for national liberation," claiming other groups such as the nationalists were actually working with the Nazis.[77] To the average Pole, this message was absurd, because they were contrary to those beliefs already held about the resistance movement. The Polish Home Army, which had no links to the communist party, was by far the largest and most popular resistance movement and shouldered the majority of the fighting.[78] The Peoples' Army was the communist underground movement, but its size was

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[72] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 94.

[73] Behrends, "Nation and Empire," 447.

[74] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 95.

[75] Behrends, "Nation and Empire," 447.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 96–97.

approximately a tenth of the Home Army's and a significant percentage was actually Soviet citizens.[79] To suggest that the communists were somehow leading the fight against the Germans did not align with majority beliefs. Popular skepticism, combined with general negativity toward communism and Russia, made the communists look foolish. As interpreted through the reasoned-action approach, the communists were attempting to change attitudes by introducing a new belief—that the communists were leading the resistance. However, this new belief conflicted with the knowledge people already held, so attitudinal change did not occur. The Polish communists' first attempt at influence operations was unsuccessful by all metrics and probably hurt their credibility more than anything. Subsequent propaganda efforts continued along nationalistic lines with little success.[80]

The next significant influence operation by the communists began when the Soviet Army reentered Poland to "liberate" it from Nazi Germany in the summer of 1944.[81] With the Soviet Army came the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN), a Soviet-backed provisional government that opposed the Polish government-in-exile and claimed legitimate rule. The PKWN's first order of business was to disseminate a manifesto in an effort to gain legitimacy and credibility.[82] Although the manifesto was just one propaganda product, it presented the general lines of persuasion the PKWN would use in influence operations, as well as a vision for the future and several issues assumed to resonate with Poles.

The July Manifesto again used nationalism as a theme, but this time the propaganda was more sensitive to commonly held beliefs.[83] The PKWN decided to selectively align with the nationalism associated with Roman Dmowski, a

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[79] Ibid., 97.

[80] Behrends, "Nation and Empire," 444–448.

[81] Ibid., 448.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., 448–449.

popular ideologue whose views had wide appeal. The communists believed identifying with some of Dmowski's views would build legitimacy for the PKWN.[84]

Following Dmowski, the PKWN urged the uniting of Slavs from Poland, Russia, and Czechoslovakia, to form "a great Slavic dam" to oppose German imperialism.[85] Dmowski was not particularly fond of Russia, but perceived Germany as the bigger threat. He had previously proposed a Russo–Polish alliance against Germany and the communists decided to reintroduce this idea. The July Manifesto recognized the bloody history between Poland and Russia, but suggested a new alliance similar to that which followed the Battle of Grunwald in 1410—a Slavic alliance to defeat Germany. The PKWN knew anti-Russian sentiment was a problem and used pan-Slavism to overcome distrust, promoting shared ethnic and cultural identification against a common enemy (Germany). However, though pan-Slavism was supported by Dmowski, it was "traditionally seen as a pretext for Russian domination" in Poland.[86] The fact that most Poles viewed PKWN and communism as a creation of Russia did not help the communist case.

The manifesto stated that national borders would be redrawn to benefit Poland[87] and made promises that resonated with the people, such as land reform, democratic freedoms, minimum wages, universal education, and immigration reform. Regardless of whether the PKWN would follow up, they did address many concerns the people had about the future of Poland, in an effort to change attitudes by moderating popular beliefs about communism.

The 1946 referendum in Poland essentially consolidated power for the communists.[88] Up to this point, they had relied on a form of nationalism to build legitimacy, with very little success. Beginning in 1947, the Soviet Union

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[84] Ibid., 449.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., 452–453.

abandoned this strategy and instead forced Eastern Bloc nations to support and promote a "utopian vision of the Soviet Union."[89] This meant building legitimacy by promoting and idealizing the Soviet Union and its form of communism. In a country with deep anti-Russian sentiment, this strategy ended in failure.

As mentioned, most Poles viewed the communist government as a creation of the Soviet Union and communism as a system that was forced on them by a hostile foreign power.[90] To counter this narrative, the communist government began a systematic campaign to portray the Soviet Union as a friend and ally whose relationship was critical for the survival of the nation. Virtually every Pole was heavily exposed to pro-Soviet or Soviet-friendship propaganda at all stages of life. Children learned poems that praised the greatness of the Soviet Union. Propaganda extolled the benefits of Soviet friendship. Censorship and propaganda operated at all levels of education, mass media, arts, and literature, and in social groups such as youth organizations and trade unions.[91] The Society for Polish–Soviet Friendship (TPPR) was created to help spread the word, staging grand displays of public support for the Soviet Union.[92] Years of propaganda saturated the various media with stories praising Russia. "Socialist content" was injected in all aspects of cultural life, and authoritarian controls over artistic and cultural organizations prevented any criticism of government policies or the Soviet Union.[93] Yet all this did nothing to change the majority attitude of the Poles, who were suffering greatly under the regime.[94]

Also despite their efforts, the Polish communists could not change the perception that they were stooges of the Soviet Union. The Polish Workers'

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[89] Ibid., 453.

[90] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 94.

[91] Ibid., 93.

[92] Behrends, "Nation and Empire," 453.

[93] Jan B. de Weydenthal, *The Communists of Poland: An Historical Outline* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 61.

[94] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 105.

Party's initialization, "PPR," was commonly mocked as the *Platne Pacholki Rosji* or "Paid Servants of Russia."[95] The actions of the Soviet Union did not help; for example, the Soviet Army's mistreatment of Polish civilians repatriating at the end of World War II angered Poles, and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), the secret police of the Soviet Union, routinely terrorized communities. In addition, the Soviet Union was perceived as economically exploiting Poland. These activities directly countered the propaganda messages, and legitimacy was so low that the party had to falsify electoral results and rig the 1946 referendum that consolidated its power. In an April 1945 meeting, an influential member of the PPR central committee acknowledged that "our propaganda is weak" and not trustworthy.[96] Władysław Gomułka, the leader of the PPR, also cited the lack of credibility and the difficulty they faced in separating themselves from the Soviets:

> Many see in Russia just a continuation of the old Russia—and the legacy of this old Russia is war and centuries of oppression. This undermines the soul of the nation. The reconfigurations of such attitudes will take a long time. . . . that Russia had stolen from Poland a considerable piece of land. This fact has far-reaching consequences for us. . . . the masses should see us as a Polish party, they should attack us as Polish communists and not as an agency [of the USSR].[97]

The Polish government's non-coercive means to influence the population was ineffective. This necessitated the government, like many Eastern Bloc nations, to use coercive means to maintain power and control. Poland's secret police regularly strong-armed groups and individuals to support the government and repressed those who did not.[98]

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[95] Behrends, "Nation and Empire," 452.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Maryjane Osa, "Networks in Opposition: Linking Organizations through Activists in the Polish People's Republic," in *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, ed. Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (Oxford University Press, 2003), 80–85.

2.   Propaganda of Success

From the 1970s to the early 1980s, the communist government began to refocus its propaganda to tout economic reforms aimed at improving the lives of ordinary Poles.[99] This effort, called the "propaganda of success," was fixed on highlighting and exaggerating the political and economic successes of the government.[100] The objective was to change negative beliefs by boosting only positive stories about the government. An example was the dubious portrayal of Poland as an advanced European country enjoying significant growth due to government reforms.[101] All levels of state-controlled media were required to support this campaign[102] and almost all television series produced at the time expressed this propaganda.[103]

Poland's propaganda of success campaign backfired. Although Poland did experience some growth during this period, it was due to loans the government borrowed from the West rather than meaningful reforms.[104] Ultimately, the loans nearly bankrupted the country and led to worse living conditions for the majority of the population, as the government was forced to raise prices on basic goods to avoid defaulting. The propaganda of success belied the grim life many were experiencing and symbolized what was wrong with the government. A *Foreign Affairs* article published during that time summarized the sentiment:

> After 35 years of communist rule in Poland, the Polish population, including the working class, ceased to believe in the Party's authority, its ability, and its right to rule. Nothing so clearly

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[99] Ray Taras, *Ideology in a Socialist State : Poland, 1956-1983* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 143.

[100] Ibid., 145.

[101] Dorota Ostrowska, "The Carnival of the Absurd: Stanisław Bareja's Alternatywy 4 and Polish Television in the 1980s," in *Popular Television in Eastern Europe During and Since Socialism*, ed. Anikó Imre, Timothy Havens, and Kati Lustyik (New York: Routledge, 2013), 75.

[102] Jane Leftwich Curry, *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 66.

[103] Ostrowska, "The Carnival of the Absurd: Stanisław Bareja's Alternatywy 4 and Polish Television in the 1980s," 75.

[104] Ibid.

demonstrated the gulf between the legal and the civil society as the overwhelming popular response to the visit of Pope John Paul II to his native country in the summer of 1979. The effects of virtual economic bankruptcy and the crisis of political authority were compounded for the population by a heightened visibility and awareness of official corruption and privilege. Workers harbored a growing sense of the injustice perpetrated by a state which claimed incessantly to represent the workers and stressed continuously in its propaganda the centrality of the workers in society.[105]

This growing sense of injustice sparked a series of protests and strikes around the country that led to the birth of the Solidarity trade union,[106] which eventually helped end communism in Poland.

C. ANALYSIS

In its various influence campaigns designed to build legitimacy, the government tried to elicit support by changing what Fishbein and Ajzen identify as behavioral beliefs. Figure 2 presents an RAA analysis of ethnic Poles who opposed the communist government. This model generalizes the target audience to make analysis possible. Based on information available, it is impossible to determine the exact weights of the three determinants of behavioral intention (attitude, perceived norm, and perceived behavioral control). However, it is clear that perceived behavioral control was weighted lowest in the minds of the people. Generally speaking, there was nothing that physically prevented the TA from performing a behavior; the perceived behavioral control was high. From this, we conclude that perceived behavioral control was the least important variable in this case. Based on this research, the TA's attitude toward the behavior was overall negative, as was the perceived norm. This helps explain why there was so much unrest throughout Polish communist rule.

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[105] Seweryn Bialer, "Poland and the Soviet Imperium," *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 3 (January 1, 1980): 526, doi:10.2307/20040807.

[106] Ostrowska, "The Carnival of the Absurd: Stanisław Bareja's Alternatywy 4 and Polish Television in the 1980s," 75.

Primary Beliefs

Behavioral
- Supporting the communist government means supporting the Soviet Union and a betrayal to my country.
- Supporting the communist government will make life worse.
- I have no positive reason to support the communist government.

Normative
- People who are important to me do not support the communist government.
- People who are important to me think that I should not support the communist government.

Control
- I am able to support the communist government if I so desire.

Behavior: TA does not (actively or passively) undermine the communist Polish government
TA: Ethnic Poles who oppose the government

Attitude (Negative)
Perceived Norm (Negative)
PBC (High)
Intention (Negative)
Behavior Not Achieved

■ Positive / High Value
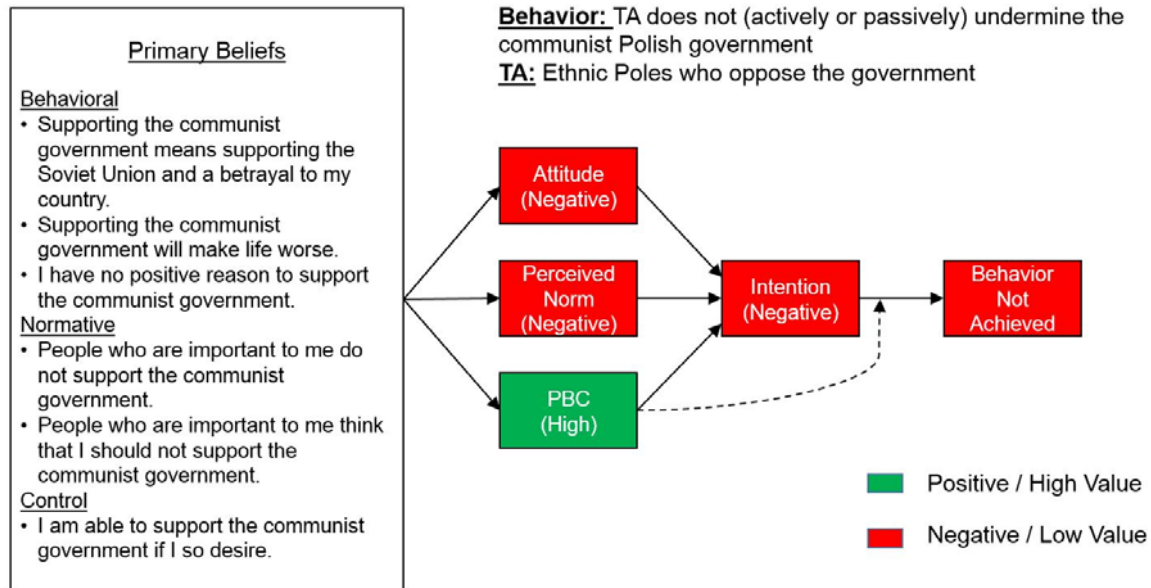■ Negative / Low Value

Figure 2.   RAA analysis of ethnic Poles who opposed the communist government

Table 1 shows likely salient beliefs of those who did not support the communist government. These beliefs are not inclusive, but nevertheless represent the general beliefs of the target audience in the period studied. The table also captures the influence themes and other beliefs that may have affected the TA's primary beliefs (those beliefs most important to the desired behavior).

The Polish campaigns were a failure because the target audience held too many beliefs that were incongruent with the influence messages the government disseminated. Its campaign to change beliefs about the Soviet Union was too ambitious—those beliefs could not be easily altered, as many communists recognized.[107] The propaganda of success campaign was equally disastrous, because the government presented a fairytale version of Poland that was not based on reality. The campaign likely discredited the government further and contributed to social unrest.[108]

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[107] Behrends, "Nation and Empire," 452.

[108] Mikolaj Stanislaw Kunicki, *Between the Brown and the Red: Nationalism, Catholicism, and Communism in Twentieth-Century Poland—The Politics of Boleslaw Piasecki* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2012), 172.

Other events the TA experienced, as listed in the third column of Table 1, likely affected popular primary beliefs more than any propaganda campaign. As a general rule, Fishbein and Ajzen describe beliefs based on personal experience as much harder to affect than those based on a secondary source.[109] The government's focus on the greatness of communism and the Soviet Union completely contradicted what people were experiencing, and thus the influence campaign was probably worse than nothing.

Primary Beliefs	Influence Themes	Other Influencing Events	Outcome
Supporting the communist government means supporting the Soviet Union and a betrayal to my country.	-Polish communists are the sole representative of a genuine struggle for national liberation -PKWN will redraw the border to benefit Poland '-Soviet friendship brings prosperity and equal rights for all -The Soviet Army liberated Poland and Soviet friendship will bring an end to centuries of conflict with Russia. -Support a Slavic alliance with Russia to oppose German aggression	-The Soviets divided the country with Nazi Germany (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact). -Poland's eastern territories annexed by the USSR in 1944 leading to forced mass migrations. -The Home Army fought in notable liberation battles while the Peoples' Army did not. '-Widespread Soviet Army mistreatment of Polish civilians as it "liberated" Poland. -Soviet involvement in the Katyn Massacre. -NKVD's reign of terror in Poland.	Failed to change belief.
Supporting the communist government means will make life worse.	-Communism brings prosperity to the people -Poland is one of the most advanced countries in Europe	-Poor economic conditions -Basic food prices skyrocketed multiple times during communist rule	Failed to change belief.
I have no positive reason to support the communist government.	-Joining the Society for Polish-Soviet Friendship or the communist party provides more opportunities	-People not friendly toward government policies harassed or do not have as many opportunities.	Marginally successfully in changing belief.
People who are important to me do not support the communist government.	N/A	-Popular uprisings in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1976, 1980-81.	Belief not targeted.
People who are important to me think that I should not support the communist government	N/A	-Popular uprisings in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1976, 1980-81.	Belief not targeted.
I am able to support the communist government if I so desire	N/A	N/A	Belief not targeted.

Table 1. Primary beliefs of Poles who did not support the government

The primary beliefs listed in Table 1 suggest that almost all communist influence messages ran counter to beliefs strongly held. Owing to social norms and history, the Soviet-friendship influence campaign could not overcome deep-

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[109] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, 333.

seated hostility. The Polish government promoted influence campaigns that portrayed the Soviets in a good light. Since they could not gain legitimacy because of their links to the Soviets, and they could not break those links, the only alternative was to expand support for the Soviets, and thus the campaign was doomed from the start.

The propaganda of success campaign had difficulty changing beliefs about the economy and country because those beliefs were usually formed through personal experience. A person whose life degraded under communist rule was unlikely to believe propaganda to the contrary.

Interestingly, the Polish government did experience legitimacy for a very short period of time around the time it implemented martial law in response to the Solidarity movement. Its stated reason for implementing martial law was the real possibility of a Soviet intervention of Poland.[110] Not only had Russia invaded Poland multiple times throughout its history, it also intervened militarily in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 to quell popular uprisings.[111] This made most Poles believe that a military intervention was plausible. The imminent threat of a Soviet invasion caused the target audience to recalculate its primary beliefs about supporting the government. The existing communist government was preferred to any government the Soviets might impose. In response to the possibility of an invasion, the Solidarity leadership described its movement as a "self-limiting revolution" and asserted that Poland would remain in the Warsaw Pact if they ever took power.[112] It is obvious that they took the possibility of a Soviet intervention very seriously and likely knew an intervention would build legitimacy for the existing communist government. When the communist government finally decided to impose martial law at the end of

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[110] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 105.

[111] Vojtech Mastny, *The Soviet Non-Invasion of Poland in 1980/81 and the End of the Cold War*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper Series (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, September 1998), 5.

[112] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 106.

1981, there was no significant resistance from Solidarity or the majority of the population—surprising the Polish, Soviet, and American governments.[113] Once the threat of an intervention was reduced, so too was the communist government's legitimacy.

The legitimacy campaign continued until the fall of the regime in 1989, having struggled through decades of trying. In an opinion poll in December 1988, only 3.6 percent of Poles expressed satisfaction with the system, 27.6 percent said some changes were needed, 43.1 percent indicated major changes were needed, and 19.1 percent completely rejected the system.[114] This sentiment helps explain the social unrest of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1976, and 1980–1981 and the government's persistent illegitimacy.

D. CONCLUSION

An analysis of the target audience's primary beliefs indicates that the Polish government's propaganda of success and Soviet-friendship influence campaigns were unlikely to ever succeed. The literature suggests that Polish communists generally understood the motivations of their TA and recognized the difficulty. However, they failed to recognize the strength of these beliefs and believed propaganda backed by state coercion was sufficient to change them. Since the communists derived most of their power from the Soviet Union, they were forced to adopt themes that contradicted anti-Soviet views and supported Soviet objectives. This unavoidable focus was probably the biggest factor in their failure to gain legitimacy, which in turn led to unrest and eventually the end of communist rule.

The case of Poland suggests that influence campaigns that use "success stories" should be avoided when influence messages are unbelievable to the target audience—that is, when they contradict primary beliefs. Disbelief is more

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[113] Mastny, *The Soviet Non-Invasion of Poland in 1980/81 and the End of the Cold War*, 31–32.

[114] Rakowska-Harmstone, "Communist Regimes' Psychological Warfare Against Their Societies: The Case of Poland," 108–109.

likely when a sponsor government lacks legitimacy and credibility among the target audience. Since legitimacy is often linked to a government's performance as an institution, it is probable that a government already enjoys significant legitimacy where a target audience's beliefs concur with the influence message. This suggests that success stories may be useful in maintaining legitimacy, but not in building legitimacy for the sponsor.

The potential Soviet intervention in the early 1980s also suggests that legitimacy can be built for a sponsor if the alternative to the sponsor is unacceptable to the population. If an influence operation is able to convince the population that the rival will grab power, it will likely boost legitimacy for the sponsor, but only until the imminent threat of the rival is eliminated.

IV.   AFGHANISTAN

A.   BACKGROUND

The United States and its allies have been fighting in Afghanistan for over a decade. Millions of dollars have been invested towards developing legitimate governance in Afghanistan, with little progress. One of the main impediments has been the Taliban. After a humiliating defeat in late 2001, the Taliban reorganized as an insurgency. Their explosive growth in numbers since 2006 has badly undermined government legitimacy, particularly in rural areas dominated by Pashtuns—the ethnic group most strongly associated with the Taliban. Thus despite years of MISO/PSYOP by coalition forces, the central government of Afghanistan has not secured legitimacy with significant portions of Pashtuns.

Generally speaking, Pashtuns have a high distrust of outsiders, and their tribal roots make them suspicious of central authority.[115] The mountainous terrain and extreme climates in southern and eastern Afghanistan contribute to the isolation of many villages and tribes. Numerous attempts in the past to establish a strong central government have failed, as many Pashtuns view such a government as a threat to their tribal way of life.[116]

As the largest ethnic group, Pashtuns have dominated the political landscape in Afghanistan; the country has been ruled almost exclusively by Pashtuns since its establishment as a state in 1747,[117] and Pashtuns remain at the core of political and state development.[118] Pashtun dominance has not necessarily translated to ethnic strife, as ordinary people have been, for the most part, tolerant of other ethnicities. However, when it comes to politics, ethnicity

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[115] *Pashtun Tribal Dynamics* (Tribal Analysis Center, October 2009), http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Pashtun%20Tribal%20Dynamics.pdf.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Sven Gunnar Simonsen, "Ethnicising Afghanistan?: Inclusion and Exclusion in Post-Bonn Institution Building," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (January 1, 2004): 709, doi:10.1080/01436590410001678942.

[118] Ibid., 710.

has always played an important role, and in the Afghan civil war (1992–1996), ethnicity became a central issue as regards claims to legitimacy.[119] In fact, every major faction involved in the civil war can be identified ethnically: Hezb-e-Islami and the Taliban are Pashtun, Jamiat-e-Islami is Tajik, Hezb-e-Wahdat is Hazara, and Jumbesh-e-Melli Islami is Uzbek.[120]

With the removal of the Taliban from power by the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance, with significant assistance from the United States, a new, ethnically inclusive central government was established. This created a perception among Pashtuns that the international community was assisting a central government that did not support Pashtun interests,[121] since they no longer dominated the political landscape at the national level. Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, has held the presidency of the government since inception, but his cabinet members, whose appointment requires parliamentary approval, are not predominantly Pashtun. Moreover, many Pashtuns saw the international effort to discredit the 2009 elections as a scheme to replace a Pashtun with a Tajik.[122] According to the University of Maryland's "Minorities at Risk" project, one of the main grievances of Pashtuns is a perceived lack of representation in the national government.[123]

The role of ethnicity is significant because the Taliban, the main insurgency against the government, has appealed to the ethnic majority by portraying itself as a Pashtun nationalist movement. In addition, since most Taliban members are Pashtun, unsurprisingly, most insurgents killed or captured are Pashtun. From the Pashtun point of view, non-Pashtun interlopers are trying

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[119] Ibid., 709.

[120] Ibid., 710.

[121] *Pashtun Tribal Dynamics*.

[122] Ibid.

[123] *Assessment for Pashtuns in Afghanistan*, Minorities at Risk Project (College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, December 31, 2006), http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=70002.

to dominate and control the country, with the help of foreign powers. As a result, most Pashtuns remain, at best, neutral towards the central government.[124]

This case study examines legitimacy-building influence operations that targeted Pashtuns in Pashtun-majority areas in southern and eastern Afghanistan in the late 2000s. The RAA is used to help understand the behavioral intent of the target audience and why the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) campaign to build legitimacy in the late-2000s has failed in large swaths of southern and eastern Afghanistan.

B.   BUILDING LEGITIMACY

Influence operations by the United States at the beginning of the war took an enemy-centered approach, focusing almost exclusively on supporting offensive operations.[125] The United States invaded Afghanistan with the intention of bringing those responsible for the September 11th attacks to justice, not for nation building or counterinsurgency, and its influence operations reflected this goal. This is important to note, because many of the heavy-handed tactics employed during this time (such as massive bombing runs) created the population's beliefs about the coalition forces and would later affect the coalition's ability to influence the population.[126]

ISAF faced two significant hurdles in helping the Afghan government build legitimacy in the late-2000s. The first was changing popular beliefs about the Afghan government and its primary benefactor, ISAF. The government's close and dependent relationship with ISAF made it difficult to disassociate the actions of the coalition from the Afghan government. The second challenge was countering the Taliban's attempts to delegitimize the central government and establish itself as the legitimate government for the Pashtuns. The Taliban

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[124] *Pashtun Tribal Dynamics*.

[125] George Dimitriu, "Winning the Story War: Strategic Communication and the Conflict in Afghanistan," *Public Relations Review* 38, no. 2 (2012): 198.

[126] Ibid., 199.

routinely carried out attacks knowing they would fail militarily. Nevertheless, these attacks were psychologically effective in creating a perception that the government could not provide security, as well as in demonstrating Taliban strength.[127] ISAF responded with two broad influence campaigns: one promoted the effectiveness of the Afghan government and the other focused on delegitimizing the Taliban and other insurgency groups.

1. Promoting the Afghan Government

ISAF's influence efforts in the mid-2000s focused primarily on the positive work of the central government and successful operations by Afghan security forces. This emphasis led to coalition forces' trying to put an "Afghan face" on almost everything they did.[128]

By the late 2000s, a common influence theme was that the Afghan government brought "peace and progress" to Afghanistan.[129] PSYOP products frequently linked support of the government with new freedoms, economic prosperity, security, and development. The population was initially receptive to these messages, but they became ineffective as the war continued and these "promises" went unfulfilled.[130] Additionally, there was a perception that many development projects were going to the north, where there were only pockets of Pashtuns.[131] This perception may have had some merit, considering the north was relatively safe and secure compared to the south and east, where most Pashtuns reside. People began to get disillusioned as corruption became rampant and infrastructure projects were undermined by corrupt officials.

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[127] Ibid., 200.

[128] Munoz, *U.S. Military Information Operations in Afghanistan: Effectiveness of Psychological Operations 2001-2010*, 82–83.

[129] Ibid., 91–92.

[130] Ibid., 82–83.

[131] Interviews with Pashtun cultural advisors, 2012.

The other problem was the perception that the presence of the ISAF and Afghan government in a given area was only temporary.[132] Years of combat operations convinced the target audience that coalition forces never stayed long. The TA consistently witnessed the Taliban's returning after being cleared by coalition forces and learned that supporting the government was a risky proposition—they could be punished when the insurgents came back.[133]

The influence operations of this period also boasted the ability of the Afghan government to provide security and defeat the Taliban. In southern and eastern Afghanistan, this was far from the truth; insecurity was rampant, and the Taliban dominated the countryside. The only area in which the government had a permanent presence was the major cities. As the Taliban returned, it established itself wherever the government lacked presence, offering dispute-resolution services and establishing law and order that otherwise did not exist.[134] Taliban-run courts were often perceived as more effective and fair than competing government systems, which were seen as corrupt.[135] Rather than rely on propaganda that aimed at changing people's attitudes, the Taliban frequently depended on tribal allegiances to maintain legitimacy among the people.[136]

2.   Delegitimizing the Insurgency

ISAF's other approach to building legitimacy for the Afghan government was to delegitimize its main competitor, the Taliban. This primarily meant pointing out the hypocrisy of their actions. As a means of establishing legitimacy with the people, the Taliban published its *Layeha,* or "codes of conduct" for its cadre, in

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[132] Dimitriu, "Winning the Story War," 200.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Tim Foxley, *The Taliban's Propaganda Activities: How Well Is the Afghan Insurgency Communicating and What Is It Saying?* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, June 2007), 19, http://www.sipri.org/research/conflict/publications/foxley.

[135] Ibid., 10.

[136] Ibid., 11.

2006.[137] The Layeha included rules for Taliban fighters to abide by and emphasized protecting civilians and catering to local sensitivities, especially in southern and rural Afghanistan—suggesting that the Taliban was also concerned about building legitimacy.[138] Coalition forces used this document by frequently pointing out incidents where the Taliban's narrative contradicted its deeds.[139] Taliban-perpetrated civilian casualties were a prime example. The coalition's campaign routinely pointed out that most civilian deaths were caused by the Taliban and suggested that either the Taliban did not care about civilian casualties (as seen by their actions) or that Taliban senior leadership did care, but had lost control of its fighters and was powerless to prevent these deaths.

Public-opinion polls conducted in southern and eastern Afghanistan in 2009 (around the time this influence campaign began) indicated only 38 and 27 percent of the population, respectively, had no sympathy for the insurgency; by 2013, that number had jumped to 49 and 54 percent, with periods in which it jumped to the low 60s in both regions.[140] Nationally, "no sympathy" went from 36 percent in 2009 to 63 percent in 2013.[141] It can be argued the coalition's influence campaign was successful in changing beliefs about the insurgency. Interestingly, this change in beliefs did not translate to changed behavior in the target audience.

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[137] Thomas H. Johnson and Matthew C. DuPee, "Analysing the New Taliban Code of Conduct (Layeha): An Assessment of Changing Perspectives and Strategies of the Afghan Taliban," *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (March 2012): 77–78, doi:10.1080/02634937.2012.647844.

[138] Ibid., 78.

[139] UN News Service, "Citing Rising Death Toll, UN Urges Better Protection of Afghan Civilians," March 9, 2011, http://www.refworld.org/docid/4d79c5951e.html.

[140] The Asia Foundation, "Afghanistan Survey: How Much Sympathy Do You Have for Armed Opposition Groups?," *The Asia Foundation*, accessed May 26, 2014, http://afghansurvey.asiafoundation.org/how-much-sympathy-do-you-have-for-armed-opposition-groups#2009.

[141] The Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2013: A Survey of the Afghan People* (Washington, DC: The Asia Foundation, 2013), 42–45, http://asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/1280.

C.   ANALYSIS

Figure 3 shows an RAA analysis of Pashtun males living in Pashtun-dominated areas in southern and eastern Afghanistan. Use of the RAA helps explain why the coalition's efforts to change popular attitudes failed to change behavior.
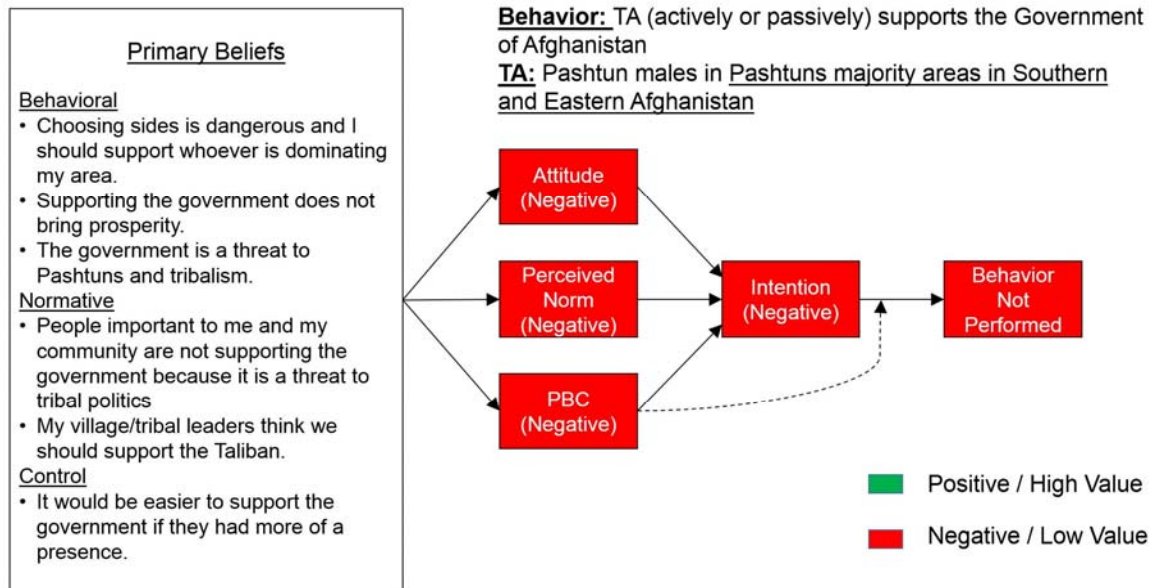

Figure 3.   Analysis of Pashtun males in Pashtun-majority areas in Southern and Eastern Afghanistan

The coalition's primary legitimacy-building campaign focused on changing target audience beliefs about the government. Nevertheless, ISAF messages promoting the government and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) had an overall negative effect on the government's credibility. In an environment where the government and ANSF had only a superficial presence, promoting the virtues and good deeds of the government likely contradicted what the target audience experienced. As discussed, it is extremely difficult to alter a belief about a particular behavior if the belief is based on firsthand experience. In Afghanistan, the clash with reality likely resulted in instant dismissal of ISAF PSYOP products and a decrease in credibility for ISAF and the government. Any time credibility is

lost, it becomes more likely that future products will be discredited instantly. Mackay et al. provide a good example of how a billboard promoting Afghan security forces did not resonate with many people:

> [An] ISAF road-side billboard, which extols the virtue and loyalty of the Afghan National Security Forces, is clearly designed to inspire confidence amongst those who see it. This is all well and good in a compliant society, one in which the rule of law is the norm. Yet in a society where corruption is endemic, where successful passage through a check-point will almost certainly require the giving of some money, such attitudinal communication does not stack up against the pragmatic reality of life on the ground.[142]

The influence campaign to delegitimize the Taliban was likely successful in changing the TA's beliefs about the Taliban, but it failed to change behavior. In a society where people value familial, communal, and tribal ties, social pressure to conform to the decisions made by leaders is very high. The decision to support the Taliban was often made at the community level, not at the individual, and contravening the tribe's decision could bring shame and ostracization to a family. In Afghanistan, the perceived norm outweighed individual attitudes and was likely the leading reason the coalition strategy of changing attitudes was unsuccessful in Pashtun areas. This is not to suggest attitudes were unimportant, but that they were secondary or tertiary to perceived norms.

Even if many Pashtuns do not agree with the tactics of the Taliban, their distrust of central government and other ethnicities makes support for the Afghan government unattractive. The idea of an organization that represents Pashtun values resonates with people in southern and eastern Afghanistan; and to Pashtuns in those regions, the Taliban is not some amorphous group the TA has never seen, but a familiar and forceful presence. It is much harder to demonize a group when regular interaction with that group occurs, and any message portraying the Taliban as murderers may run counter to what the TA regularly experiences.

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[142] Mackay, Tatham, and Rowland, *Why RAND Missed the Point*, 5.

D.   CONCLUSION

This study is another example of influence operations failing because the messages promulgated were intended to change strongly held beliefs. Promoting the positive aspects of the government did not resonate and contradicted the TA's experience. As we have seen, if a target audience forms a belief from personal experience, it is very difficult for any type of influence message to change this belief.[143] The Afghan case suggests that influence planners should not have chosen a campaign that focused on highlighting the positive deeds of the government, because it is too incongruent with reality, especially where there is little government presence or legitimacy. This type of campaign is more appropriate where significant levels of support for the government already exist and the desired effect is to maintain that support. A better goal would have been to change less strongly held beliefs, which can be identified through a pilot study using the RAA, as described in Chapter II.

The other problem with influence operations in Afghanistan is that they were targeting the wrong beliefs to change. The beliefs the coalition was trying to change were not the TA's primary beliefs, so the effort did not result in behavioral change. For example, if one of the primary behavioral beliefs the TA has is that the coalition and government presence are temporary, it does not really matter whether the TA thinks the Taliban is a group of murdering criminals. The opinion polls show that the coalition's influence campaign did indeed change people's beliefs about the Taliban, but those beliefs were irrelevant, at least at the time, to whether the TA would support the Taliban. Improving legitimacy by undermining the opposition seems not to have worked in Afghanistan.

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[143] Fishbein and Ajzen, *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*, 333.

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V. HEZBOLLAH

A. BACKGROUND

The Lebanese civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990, was largely fought along ethnic and sectarian lines. The war destroyed the country both economically and politically and created the conditions for Hezbollah to exist.[144] With the backing of the Iranian government, this Shia Islamic militant group was born following Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982, and what started as a small guerrilla movement is now a legitimate political force within Lebanon. Since its inception, Hezbollah, or "the Party of God," has supported the Shia Islamic fundamentalist ideology expounded by Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.[145] Its goals include the expulsion of Israel and the transformation of Lebanon to a Shia-based Islamic republic. Hezbollah has built a loyal following by providing popular and essential social and civil services[146] and has relied heavily on influence operations to achieve political and military objectives, both domestically and internationally.[147]

The Lebanese Shiites have a long history as victims of oppression and have often accused the Lebanese government of treating them as second-class citizens in comparison to Maronite Christians and Sunnis.[148] Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978 to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO's) military structure only added to Shiite helplessness, as it resulted in over a thousand

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[144] Mackay and Tatham, *Behavioural Conflict: Why Understanding People and Their Motivations Will Prove Decisive in Future Conflict*, 37.

[145] Frederic M. Wehrey, "A Clash of Wills: Hizballah's Psychological Campaign Against Israel in South Lebanon," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 13, no. 3 (2002): 55, doi:10.1080/09592310208559197.

[146] Mackay and Tatham, *Behavioural Conflict: Why Understanding People and Their Motivations Will Prove Decisive in Future Conflict*, 39.

[147] Edward M. Lopacienski et al., "Influence Operations: Redefining the Indirect Approach" (Naval Postgraduate School, 2011), 121.

[148] Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 12.

Shiite civilian deaths and created close to 250,000 refugees.[149] The 1982 invasion of southern Lebanon by Israel was perceived as another assault on Shiites, even though the stated purpose of the invasion was to dislodge the PLO from southern Lebanon. Furthermore, the Shiites viewed the May 17, 1983, accord between Lebanon and Israel as an attempt to subjugate Shiites in southern Lebanon under a pro-Israeli, Maronite Christian government. Finally, Shiites were very dissatisfied with the PLO and especially its military performance in 1978 and 1982 against Israel.[150] Together, these factors set conditions for a pro-Shia militant group like Hezbollah to emerge. In effect, Israel's invasion of Lebanon paved the way for Hezbollah.

In 2000, Israel finally withdrew from southern Lebanon and, not surprisingly, Hezbollah took credit for this development.[151] With the Israeli occupation over, one of the primary justifications for Hezbollah's existence was obviated, and some began to doubt Hezbollah's future.[152] But rather than disarm, Hezbollah affirmed its position as the defender of Lebanon, this time to protect the country from future Israeli aggression.[153]

B.   BUILDING LEGITIMACY

Obviously, one of Hezbollah's primary target audiences for influence operations was Lebanon's Shia community.[154] In the late 1980s, Hezbollah began to compete with Amal, a secular Shia movement backed by Syria, for

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[149] Ibid., 16.

[150] Ibid., 17.

[151] Terence D. Trenchard, *Hezbollah in Transition: Moving from Terrorism to Political Legitimacy* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 24, 2011), 9, http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=714823.

[152] Eric Lob, *Is Hezbollah Confronting a Crisis of Popular Legitimacy?*, Middle East Brief (Waltham, MA: Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, March 2014), 2, http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB78.pdf.

[153] Trenchard, *Hezbollah in Transition: Moving from Terrorism to Political Legitimacy*, 9.

[154] Ron Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (February 1, 2006): 1–19, doi:10.1080/10576100500351185.

control of southern Lebanon and its Shia population.[155] To gain legitimacy with Shiites, Hezbollah, with the support of Iran, began to provide the basic services a government would normally provide.[156] This included medical care, education, water, electricity, housing, vocational training, and the construction of infrastructure.[157] Amal, by contrast, could not offer these services and instead relied on a patronage system where supporters, friends, and relatives of the movement were rewarded.[158] Amal was soon marginalized and Hezbollah became the dominant Shia organization in Lebanon. For many citizens, these services filled a void that the Lebanese government was unable to cover and helped solidify the party's legitimacy among Shiites.

The services Hezbollah provided were extended to non-Shiites after the party's makeover in the mid-1990s into a more pragmatic and inclusive political organization.[159] Hezbollah continues to offer a full spectrum of services, and its ability to effectively provide these services has led to scholars characterizing it as a "mini-state" within a state.[160] To illustrate Hezbollah's capabilities, in 1996 it rebuilt over 5,000 homes and compensated over 2,300 farmers for air and artillery strikes by Israel.[161] By offering these services to all, Hezbollah reinforced its claim to represent every Lebanese, not just Shiites.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, Hezbollah began to reach out to Christians, Sunni, and Druze populations by adopting a nationalistic platform.[162] Unity among Lebanese was a motif frequently used to build support, but the party knew it could do this only by answering concerns that non-Shiites had about its

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[155] Lopacienski et al., "Influence Operations: Redefining the Indirect Approach," 126.

[156] Ibid., 127.

[157] Lob, *Is Hezbollah Confronting a Crisis of Popular Legitimacy?*, 1.

[158] Augustus R. Norton, "The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanese Domestic Politics," *The International Spectator* 42, no. 4 (December 2007): 478, doi:10.1080/03932720701722852.

[159] Lopacienski et al., "Influence Operations: Redefining the Indirect Approach," 133.

[160] Wehrey, "A Clash of Wills," 57.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid., 55.

connection with Iran and Syria. Hezbollah's messages asserted that all Lebanese shared a common enemy (Israel) and that Hezbollah was leading the way in countering this enemy and liberating the country. With unity as a theme, Hezbollah painted itself in a positive light, posing as the true defenders of Lebanon,[163] avoiding any mention of establishing an Islamic state, and promising that the people could eventually choose their own form of government.[164] Nationalism was the major line of persuasion in this influence operation, and Hezbollah propaganda frequently used images of the Lebanese flag alongside Hezbollah's yellow flag. Ultimately, Hezbollah wanted to be viewed as Lebanon's only true freedom fighter. This campaign of unity intensified with Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, since Hezbollah saw the need to reassure its constituents after the Israeli pullout.[165]

Hezbollah also employed a version of Poland's "propaganda of success"—its propaganda routinely exaggerated battlefield successes against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and downplayed losses.[166] However, unlike the communist government in Poland, Hezbollah's exaggerations did not prove detrimental to influence operations. Frequently repeated in international media, they created sympathy for Hezbollah's cause, not only in Lebanon but around the world.[167]

The demonization of Israel was a key theme in Hezbollah's propaganda narratives and influence operations aimed at building legitimacy.[168] Israel was portrayed as bloodthirsty and brutal, absolutely incapable of humanity. Using images and videos of civilians killed by the IDF, Hezbollah reinforced beliefs their

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[163] Lopacienski et al., "Influence Operations: Redefining the Indirect Approach," 128.

[164] Schleifer, "Psychological Operations," 10.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Clifford D. May, "Hezbollah's Psych-Ops," *National Review Online*, accessed May 23, 2014, http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/218401/hezbollahs-psych-ops/clifford-d-may.

[167] Mackay and Tatham, *Behavioural Conflict: Why Understanding People and Their Motivations Will Prove Decisive in Future Conflict*, 39.

[168] Schleifer, "Psychological Operations," 11.

target audience already held concerning Israel. These products were often very graphic, designed to inflame the target audience's emotions as Israel was castigated for injustice and poverty, and Hezbollah recast negative attitudes toward Jews in a religious context, framing conflict with Israel as a religious duty. These efforts to demonize Israel resonated with many Lebanese, regardless of religion.[169]

Hezbollah's anti-Israel, pro-nationalistic propaganda, along with its well-received social and civil services, was very effective in building legitimacy among Shiites. It had mixed results, however, among Lebanese of other faiths, due to its Shia fundamentalist roots. During the 2006 Israeli–Hezbollah war, 80 percent of Christians supported Hezbollah, along with 89 percent of Sunnis, and 80 percent of Druzes.[170] These figures were much higher than before the war, and the surge in support was likely because most non-Shiites viewed Israel as a greater threat than Hezbollah. Support for Hezbollah dropped after the war, and in a poll conducted in 2010, only 12 percent of Sunnis and 20 percent of Christians in Lebanon (compared to 94 percent of Shiites) viewed Hezbollah favorably.[171] When the threat of Israel was perceived as very real, non-Shiites were quick to support Hezbollah, which was seen to be the only legitimate force capable of defending Lebanon. This legitimacy was gained by default, since there was no other organization or group in Lebanon that rivaled Hezbollah.[172] Non-Shiite support for Hezbollah slowly dropped after the war as sectarian issues reemerged and reached its nadir when Hezbollah intervened in Syria's civil war in 2012.[173]

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[169] Ibid.

[170] Nicholas Blanford, "Israeli Strikes May Boost Hizbullah Base," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 28, 2006, http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0728/p06s01-wome.html.

[171] Pew Research Center, "Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*, December 2, 2010, http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/12/02/muslims-around-the-world-divided-on-hamas-and-hezbollah/.

[172] Blanford, "Israeli Strikes May Boost Hizbullah Base."

[173] Lob, *Is Hezbollah Confronting a Crisis of Popular Legitimacy?*, 3.

C. ANALYSIS

Considering that Hezbollah is a pro-Shia organization, it is no surprise that most Shiites viewed it as legitimate and it is easy to see why Shiites were quick to embrace Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The more interesting issue is how Hezbollah was able to gain legitimacy among non-Shiites, albeit temporarily, during the 2006 Lebanon war. Figure 4 shows an analysis of non-Shiites before the 2006 Lebanon war using the reasoned-action-approach model. Figure 5 uses the same model to analyze non-Shiite Lebanese during the 2006 Lebanon war. As with previous analyses, the highlighted beliefs of the target audience are those identified in published research papers or news reports, and are not meant to be all-inclusive.
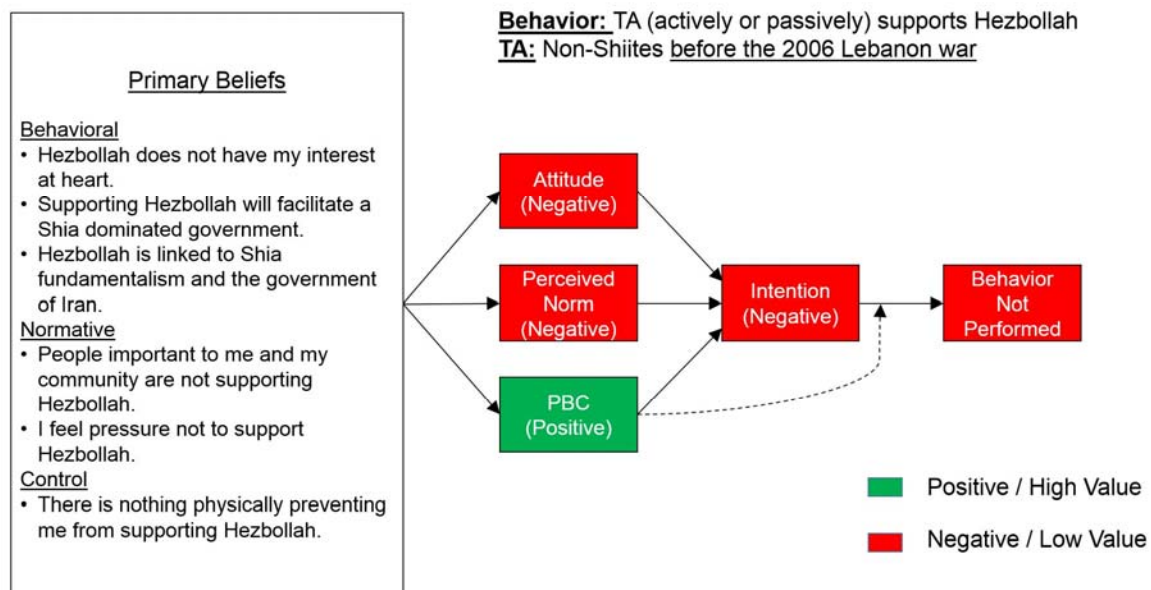

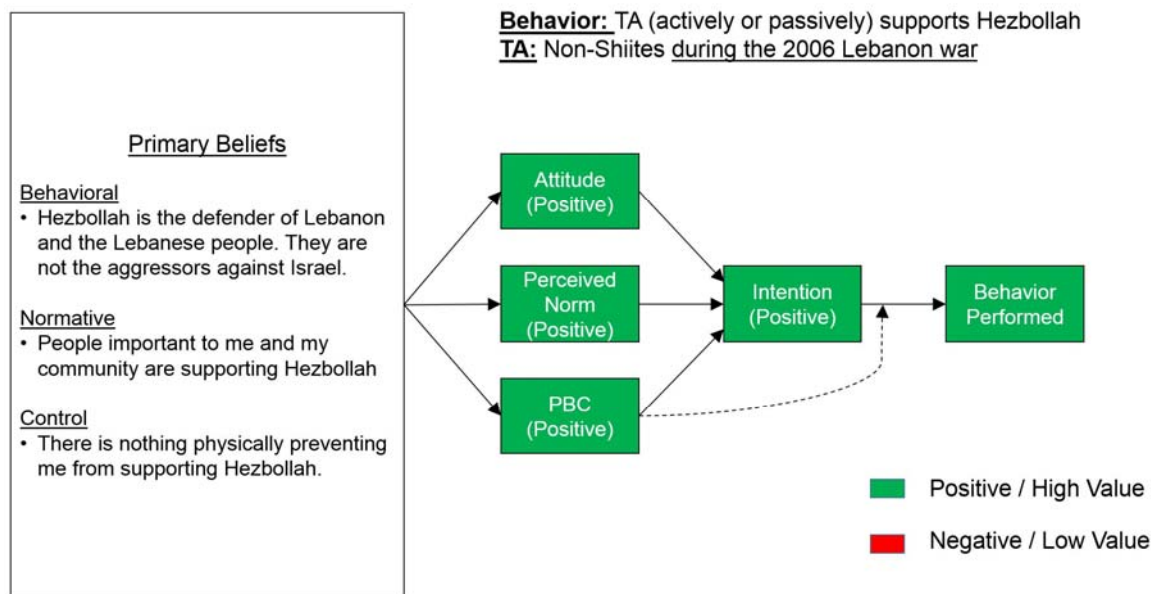Figure 4.   Analysis of non-Shiites *before* the 2006 Lebanon War.

Figure 5.   Analysis of non-Shiites *during* the 2006 Lebanon war.

The target audience's behavioral beliefs about Hezbollah did not change drastically between the period before the 2006 Lebanese war and during the war. What did change was the saliency of the target audience's primary beliefs, or those beliefs they considered when deciding whether to support Hezbollah. Wartime support rose not because the TA stopped believing that Hezbollah was trying to establish a Shia caliphate, but because that specific belief was no longer primary, due to the perceived greater weight of the war with Israel, and was likely replaced with different beliefs more appropriate in the situation—for example, the belief that Hezbollah was the only group capable of defending Lebanon.

During the 2006 war, propaganda-of-success type messages, in conjunction with demonization of Israel, resonated with the population. Hezbollah effectively used self-aggrandizing propaganda and graphic images to mobilize people through emotionally resonant appeals. However, this type of propaganda did not actually build legitimacy—rather, it was instead used to amplify preexisting beliefs as the narrative continued to reinforce Hezbollah's deeds, and vice versa. Hezbollah initially built legitimacy with Shiites through social and civil

services the government could not provide.[174] The RAA model suggests it is unlikely Hezbollah could have gained legitimacy with propaganda alone.

Self-promoting propaganda proved far less successful with non-Shiites after the war. Their behavioral beliefs indicated skepticism that Hezbollah represented their interests, and they did not trust a fundamentalist Shia party. Hezbollah tried to overcome this strongly held belief by opening its social services to all faiths and portraying itself as a nationalist cause. Here, the reasoned-action approach shows that even if Hezbollah could change the attitudes of non-Shiites, it was still socially and religiously unacceptable for non-Shiites to support a fundamentalist Shia movement.

D.   CONCLUSION

Hezbollah has successfully built legitimacy for itself with Shiites through a mixture of propaganda (that demonized Israel) and social services that the government could not effectively provide. It was not successful in building legitimacy with non-Shiites in the long term, due to strongly held beliefs that Hezbollah could not be change with its influence operations.

As in Poland and Afghanistan, self-promoting influence messages are ineffective unless the message is congruent with the beliefs of the target audience. Hezbollah successfully used such propaganda to maintain legitimacy with the Shia population, since their target audience was already receptive to the propaganda. For non-Shiites who were not receptive, self-promoting propaganda was not as successful, because Hezbollah's past actions contradicted its message of unity and nationalism.

This case study shows that legitimacy can be quickly built when an influence campaign is able to change the target audience's formulation of primary beliefs. As mentioned in Chapter II, primary beliefs form the foundation of a person's behavior. An influence campaign may change a belief, but if it is not a

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[174] Lopacienski et al., "Influence Operations: Redefining the Indirect Approach," 133.

primary belief, behavioral change will not occur. The 2006 Lebanese war did not cause non-Shiites to fundamentally alter their beliefs, but it did cause them to reevaluate their primary beliefs in the matter of supporting Hezbollah. Once the threat of Israel diminished after the war, non-Shiites once again reevaluated their primary beliefs and went back to opposing Hezbollah.

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VI. CONCLUSION

A. INTRODUCTION

This study examined multiple non-coercive influence campaigns that were designed to build legitimacy for a sponsor at the national level. The preliminary research produced two hypotheses, which were put forth in the first chapter. This final chapter reviews the validity of those two hypotheses and offers recommendations for future influence operations.

B. VALIDITY OF HYPOTHESES

1. Hypothesis 1: Messages that primarily focus on promoting the sponsor are likely to succeed in building legitimacy for the sponsor.

This hypothesis is rejected based on the three case studies examined. Influence campaigns that primarily focus on promoting the government/sponsor tend to fail. These cases reveal that people who find the government illegitimate are unlikely to be persuaded to support it through non-coercive means. This is likely because their behavior is determined by strongly held beliefs that cannot be easily changed.

There is evidence to suggest that these types of campaigns actually harm the sponsor's credibility and decrease its legitimacy. For example, a government that struggles to provide basic services to its citizens will lose credibility when it disseminates messages that highlight the positive aspects of government development projects. Even if the message is truthful, its content is at odds with the target audience's experiences with the government and will cause them to instantly reject the message and distrust the government further.

2. Hypothesis 2: Messages that primarily focus on undermining a competing adversary are more likely to succeed in building legitimacy for the sponsor.

This hypothesis is also rejected. The three case studies failed to show long-term legitimacy can be obtained by undermining a sponsor's adversaries.

The Afghanistan case showed messages that undermined the Taliban were successful in changing people's beliefs but unsuccessful in building legitimacy for the government. In Afghanistan, social norms likely played a larger role in determining legitimacy than attitude. The case of Hezbollah revealed that their influence campaign of demonizing Israel resonated with most Lebanese but failed to gain legitimacy with non-Shiites because of pre-existing beliefs about Hezbollah.

In two of the three cases (Poland and Hezbollah), there was a temporary boost in legitimacy for the sponsor when the target audience perceived an imminent threat from a group that was perceived as worse than the sponsor. After Israel's intervention into southern Lebanon in 2006, it became very apparent to most Lebanese that Hezbollah was a legitimate defender of Lebanese freedom. The invasion caused non-Shiite Lebanese, who traditionally opposed Hezbollah, to recalculate their primary beliefs and begin to view Hezbollah as a legitimate organization, because there was no other organization that could militarily counter Israel. Hezbollah was able to enjoy legitimacy from non-Shiites while the conflict lasted, but lost it soon after the war ended.

C.   RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   Understand the Target Audience's Behavior

Contemporary influence operations fail because planners fail to identify the target audience's determinants of behavior. The reasoned-action-approach model offers a well-tested framework to understand human social behavior and should be incorporated in designing future influence campaigns. The military does not currently have an effective framework to conduct target audience analysis, as pointed out in Chapter II.

2.   Avoid "Success Story" Influence Campaigns

The United States military has spent tens of millions of dollars[175] in Iraq and Afghanistan on influence campaigns that tried to build legitimacy for the host nation governments by promoting "success stories." This study concludes such campaigns are ineffective in building legitimacy but may be effective in maintaining legitimacy. The reasoned-action approach suggests that such campaigns reinforce existing beliefs more than they cause a target audience to adopt a new belief. Messages will not be credible to the target audience when they contradict reality.

3.   Measure Legitimacy by Measuring Behavior

Measuring political legitimacy is difficult due to its ambiguous definition, but for influence campaigns to succeed, it is important that legitimacy be measured in terms of behavior and not attitudes (public-opinion polls).[176] The military's experience with opinion polls in Iraq and Afghanistan supports this view. In the end, what the military cares about is behavioral change more than a frame of mind or attitude.

4.   Introduce New Beliefs to the Target Audience If Existing Beliefs Cannot Be Changed

This study suggests that the target audience can be influenced without changing their beliefs. New beliefs can be introduced that can cause the target audience to reassess whether to perform a behavior. For example, Israel's attack of southern Lebanon in 2006 was the basis for forming a "new belief" that altered the target audience's calculus to support Hezbollah. Because of this newly introduced belief, the non-Shiite target audience no longer cared that Hezbollah was a pro-Shiite group, because the threat of Israel was much greater. The

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[175] Tom Vanden Brook, "Report Raps Military Propaganda Efforts as Ineffective," *USA Today*, May 13, 2013, http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/05/23/military-propaganda-operations-poorly-coordinated-often-ineffective/2354235/.

[176] Fraser, "Validating a Measure of National Political Legitimacy."

target audience's existing beliefs about Hezbollah did not have to be changed for non-Shiites to support it as a legitimate Lebanese organization.

D.   CONCLUDING REMARKS

For the United States military to become more effective and proficient at influence operations, it needs to be able to identify and modify the primary beliefs that make up behavioral intentions. If it cannot modify the beliefs because they are too strong, then it needs to alter how the primary beliefs are formulated by introducing new beliefs. Although this thesis focuses on influence operations related to legitimacy building, the applicability for its use in other types of influence operations exists. This research shows that the reasoned-action-approach model can play an important role not only in conducting target audience analysis, but in designing future influence campaigns.

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